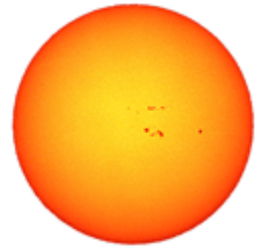













Monitor Young Athletes for Heat-Related Illness



Heat injuries are among the leading causes of sports deaths among young athletes. Young people who have a prior history of heat illness, have other underlying illnesses (such as diabetes), and who take certain medications (including antihistamines and

Ritalin), are at higher risk. Children and teens also may be less likely to notice the early warning signs that they are over-heating, either because they are having fun or competing to impress fellow team members or coaches. That's why it's critical for coaches, coaching assistants and parents to watch youngsters closely for these **signs of heat-related illness**:

-  **Heavy sweating**
-  **Paleness**
-  **Muscle cramps**
-  **Tiredness**
-  **Weakness**
-  **Dizziness**
-  **Headache**
-  **Nausea and vomiting**
-  **Fainting**
-  **Fast, weak pulse**
-  **Fast, shallow breathing**

Athletes who show any of these symptoms should be taken out of practice immediately, taken inside or to a shady place and given cool drinks. If the child begins to exhibit changes in thought processes or behavior, call 911 immediately. Changes in central nervous system function are a critical feature of heat stroke, which can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment isn't provided right away.


Heat-related illnesses can be avoided by making sure young people drink plenty of fluids before, during and after exercise.


- Have them drink every 20 minutes throughout the exercise period.
- Cool drinks are better than warm drinks.
- Avoid beverages with caffeine.
- Water is the best beverage choice.


Providing the proper clothing and rest is also important to avoiding heat-related illness.

- Lightweight clothing that breathes is best.
- Youngsters should have a shaded place to rest.
- Athletes should have time out of helmets and pads every 30 minutes.

Important Information for Parents:

 If your child is an athlete, be sure to notify his or her coaches of any medical conditions such as asthma or diabetes and any medication the child takes.

 Monitor children playing in yards and parks. Stop them every 20 to 30 minutes and offer them water or other cool non-caffeine drinks.

 Never leave a child or pet in a closed car, even for just a few minutes. Temperatures inside a vehicle with the windows rolled up can quickly reach 120 to 140 degrees. Such temperatures can cause serious illness and death in a short time.

For more information about heat-related illnesses, contact the Epidemiology Section of the Memphis and Shelby County Health Department at (901) 544-7360, Monday - Friday, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.